

DERBY

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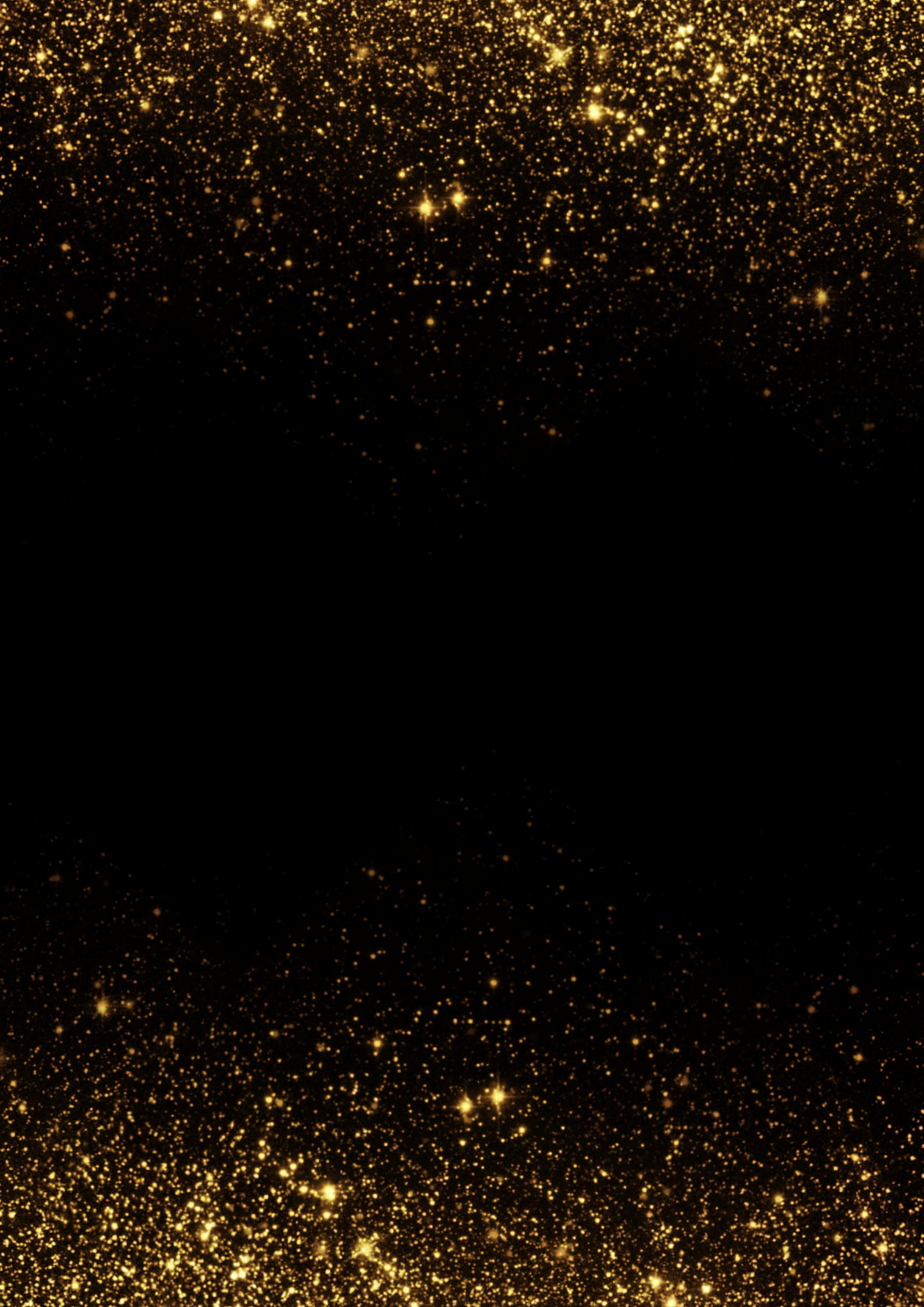
2026

VOLUNTARY
SECTOR AWARDS



Brought to you by
Community Action Derby
in partnership with Derby Homes
with support from Cosy Foundation





WELCOME

The Derby Voluntary Sector Awards are a celebration of the people, groups and organisations who help make Derby a stronger, kinder and more connected city.

At a time when many communities are facing increasing challenges, volunteers, community groups and voluntary organisations continue to step forward to support others with generosity and compassion.



Kim Harper
CEO of Community
Action Derby

Every day across Derby, people give their time and energy to help those around them, often quietly and without recognition.

Whether through grassroots community action, local clubs, community spaces, specialist support services or simple acts of kindness, the contribution made by Derby's voluntary and community sector is invaluable.

At Community Action Derby, we are proud to work alongside so many inspiring individuals, groups and organisations, and these awards are an opportunity to celebrate the difference you make across our city.

Your kindness, dedication and commitment make a difference every single day. Derby would not be the same without you. Thank you for all that you do.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim". The signature is elegant and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the word.



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Order of the Night

6.00 - 6.45pm	Guest arrival, with welcome drinks and harp music
7.00pm	Welcome and opening speeches
7.15pm	Presentation of 7 awards <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arts, Culture and Heritage Award• Young Volunteer Award – Age 5–17• Sporting Award• Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion Award• Community Champion Award• Health and Wellbeing Award• Youth Work Award
7.45 - 8.45pm	Break and buffet, with entertainment
9.00pm	Presentation of 6 awards <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Space Award• New Arrivals Ambassador Award• Young Volunteer Award – Age 18–24• Green Ambassador Award• Trustee of the Year Award• Overcoming Barriers Award
9.25pm	Presentation of Lifetime Achievement Award
9.30 - 10.00pm	Closing remarks and winners' group photograph

About Community Action Derby, Derby Homes & Cosy Foundation

Community Action Derby is a registered charity and the leading support organisation for Derby's voluntary and



community sector, helping not-for-profit organisations to thrive and driving positive change across the city. Since the 1970s, we have worked alongside charities, community groups, volunteers and partners to strengthen communities, tackle inequality and improve wellbeing. We provide support, guidance and development opportunities for organisations and individuals involved in voluntary action, while also leading projects and partnerships that respond to local needs. Our work spans volunteering, health and wellbeing, social action, community development and partnership working, helping to build stronger, more connected and more resilient communities across Derby.

Derby Homes has proudly supported the Derby Voluntary Sector Awards for several years. With a strong commitment to supporting voluntary organisations and helping them grow, Derby Homes



manages 22 community spaces throughout the city. These are available for volunteers to use free of charge if they host activities open to the public. Derby Homes also provides funding to the Derby Association of Community Partners (DACP), an independent tenant's federation. The DACP distributes this funding to voluntary organisations and community projects in Derby. Derby Homes continues to work in partnership to deliver funding and support to help ensure community-led outreach services and activities remain accessible to those who depend on them the most.

Cosy combines a passion for natural childhood and education with a deep commitment to social impact, donating 10% of its profits through the Cosy Foundation to support grassroots charities, children's education, community projects and life-changing opportunities for young people in the UK and developing countries.



About Volunteer Centre Derby and Volunteers' Week



Community Action Volunteer Centre was established in 1992 to support volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations across the city. Part of Community Action Derby, the centre connects individuals and groups with volunteering opportunities that make a difference in local communities, while also supporting organisations to recruit, manage and develop volunteers effectively.

We work with people of all ages and backgrounds, helping individuals gain confidence, develop skills, meet new people and give back to their communities through volunteering. We also support charities, community groups and organisations to manage volunteers effectively and provide safe, inclusive and meaningful volunteering opportunities.

The centre is VCQA accredited, the national quality standard for Volunteer Centres, recognising the quality and effectiveness of our service. In 2023, we launched a new online volunteering database for the city, strengthening our role as the go-to place for volunteering in Derby.



Volunteers' Week is an annual UK-wide campaign held from the first Monday in June to celebrate and recognise the contributions of volunteers. Launched in 1984, this initiative provides organisations and communities a platform to thank current and past volunteers for their invaluable efforts. The campaign highlights the diversity and unity of volunteer work across the UK, fostering connections between national organisations and grassroots groups, and celebrating the spirit of volunteering that enriches communities each year.

Award Winners

Arts, Culture and Heritage Award

Anansi Theatre Company gives girls and women of colour in Derby a space to see themselves, express themselves, and tell their own stories. The company runs workshops, performances, and projects like the Summer Club and puppetry sessions, giving participants practical experience in theatre, storytelling, and leadership. These activities build confidence, provide a voice, and create a sense of belonging. What makes Anansi unique is that it is led by and for women of colour. Every project is inclusive, culturally rooted, and designed to empower those involved. Anansi amplifies underrepresented voices, removes barriers, and equips participants to create, perform, and thrive. By combining creativity with inclusion, Anansi Theatre Company transforms lives, shapes futures, and demonstrates what is possible when culture, representation, and opportunity come together.



Young Volunteer Award - Age 5-17

Sponsored by Cosy Foundation

Corey Dobson attended Derbyshire Children's Holiday Centre in 2024 and had such a positive experience that, when he heard the charity needed to raise funds to reopen, he immediately wanted to help. At just nine years old, Corey set himself the challenge of walking 100 miles over one month, alongside organising cake sales with his mum. His determination saw him complete the full distance and raise over £1,800 for the charity. Now aged 10, Corey has continued to fundraise and advocate for the charity, helping other children to access the same opportunities he received. In recognition of his efforts, Corey has been named the charity's first Junior Ambassador. His story shows that age is no barrier to making a difference.



Award Winners

Sporting Award

Kenny Sharpe has dedicated over 20 years to Stockbrook Colts Football Club, volunteering countless hours to support the club, its players and the wider community. As the first to arrive and the last to leave, Kenny has sacrificed personal time and committed himself to training sessions, match days and the everyday running of the club. His contribution has extended far beyond football, supporting families, organising fundraising activities and helping ensure no one is left behind. For Kenny, success has never been measured by results, but by the relationships built, the opportunities created and the positive impact on people's lives. As he retires after more than two decades, Kenny leaves a lasting legacy built on the values and principles he worked tirelessly to establish.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion Award

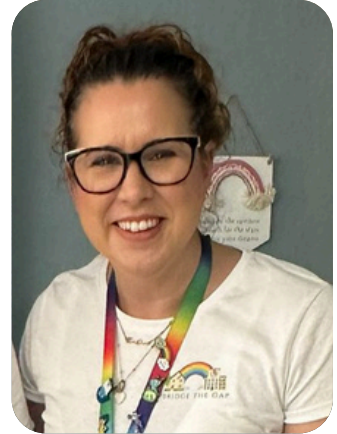
Normanton Steering Group - DT Communities has transformed Derby's cultural landscape through a programme of events, performances and workshops shaped by local people. Many residents had never seen their language, culture, heritage or lived experiences represented in this way before. Events including United Colours of Derby, Festival of the Feast and Qawwali Night have celebrated the area's diversity, reduced isolation and brought communities together while creating spaces where people feel welcomed and represented. The group also introduced the first Punjabi language play many residents had seen performed locally. What makes the group unique is its grassroots approach. Made up of people from the community, members are united by friendship, a belief in celebrating culture and a shared drive to enrich lives.



Award Winners

Community Champion Award

Katie Bentley has been a longstanding volunteer with Bridge the Gap since first discovering the charity as a parent when her own children were struggling. Drawing on those experiences, she has dedicated herself to supporting other families facing similar challenges. As Volunteer Stakeholder Director of Bridge the Gap, Katie plays a vital role in ensuring the CIC continues to support families effectively. She gives her time willingly and consistently, often behind the scenes, with no expectation of recognition. Her contribution includes managing finances and supporting recruitment and HR, while also helping ensure the organisation remains responsive to the needs of the families it supports. Known for her warmth, compassion and reliability, Katie is a trusted source of support for both families and staff, making a lasting difference across the community.



Health and Wellbeing Award

Katrina Foulkes has volunteered with the Deaf Cancer Support Project since 2018, helping transform support for Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users affected by cancer. As a cancer survivor herself, she understands the challenges people face and uses her experiences to support others with empathy and compassion. During the Covid lockdown, Katrina volunteered hundreds of hours to deliver peer support sessions online, creating safe spaces in BSL where people could connect and feel understood. What makes Katrina truly exceptional is her empathy, cultural understanding and unwavering commitment. Despite facing personal hardship and health challenges, Katrina continues supporting others with compassion and consistency. She also raises awareness locally by organising information stalls and encouraging more volunteers to join. Her impact has been life-changing.



Award Winners

Youth Work Award

Ajibola Olajide-Shokunbi has made a lasting impact on the children supported by TES Community CIC through his dedication to STEM education. By making science exciting, accessible and engaging, he has helped young people build confidence, develop new skills and believe in their own potential. Ajibola brings learning to life in a way that encourages children to feel involved, capable and proud of what they can achieve. His patience, encouragement and passion for STEM have inspired many children to take a genuine interest in science and discovery, with some now dreaming of studying science at university and becoming what they proudly call “science masters”. What makes Ajibola’s contribution special is the way he nurtures confidence and ambition alongside learning. Through his support and encouragement, he is helping young people imagine greater possibilities for their future.



Community Space Award

Connected Perinatal Support is a volunteer-led CIC supporting new and expectant parents across Derby through free, accessible peer support groups. Their welcoming community spaces help reduce isolation, strengthen connections and support parent



wellbeing during the perinatal period. The organisation currently runs seven groups across the city, including dedicated groups for dads, providing hundreds of hours of support each year. Led by trained peer supporters, the groups create safe, non-judgemental spaces where parents can share experiences, build friendships and access support from people who understand what they are going through. All groups are drop-in, open throughout the year at pushchair and wheelchair accessible venues and available to all parents, helping remove barriers to support and connection at a vital stage of family life.

Award Winners

New Arrivals Ambassador Award

New Arrivals Voice has transformed how people with lived experience of migration are heard, valued and involved in decision-making across Derby and beyond. Before the group was established, people navigating the asylum and immigration system were often spoken about rather than listened to, with limited opportunities to shape services and policy. As a lived experience-led panel, **New Arrivals Voice** creates a safe and empowering space for people to share their perspectives, influence services and build confidence. Members are leaders, advisors and changemakers, helping shape more humane and effective responses to migration while developing confidence, skills and leadership experience themselves. What makes the group unique is its authenticity and consistency. Rather than being a one-off consultation, **New Arrivals Voice** places lived experience at the heart of ongoing conversations, helping redefine what meaningful participation and co-production can look like.



Young Volunteer Award - Age 18-24

Sponsored by Cosy Foundation

D'Mya Sandar attended Derby Toc H Children's Camp as a child and has volunteered with the charity ever since turning 18. By the age of 19, she had already become a committee member and trustee, showing a deep commitment to supporting children and families through the charity's work. In 2024, aged just 22, **D'Mya** took on the role of fundraising coordinator during one of the charity's most challenging periods. Alongside working full time and completing her Master's degree, she worked tirelessly to raise the funds needed to keep the camp running, organising fundraising events, raising awareness and inspiring others through her determination and energy. Thanks to **D'Mya's** dedication, the camp has been able to continue supporting children across Derby.



Award Winners

Green Ambassador Award

Ali Davies-Marsh of Greener Littleover is a driving force for positive environmental action and community connection across Derby West. Through projects and events that bring people together, Ali has created opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to get involved, learn new skills and feel part of their local community. Last year, Ali coordinated the Blagreaves and Littleover poppy displays, bringing together schools, families, veterans and residents in a project rooted in education, inclusion and remembrance. Ali also founded and organises Derby West Great Big Green Week, helping strengthen neighbourhood partnerships and celebrate local environmental action. Through Greener Littleover, Ali has strengthened community spirit, improved local spaces and empowered countless people to make a positive difference, all while working full time for the NHS.



Trustee of the Year Award

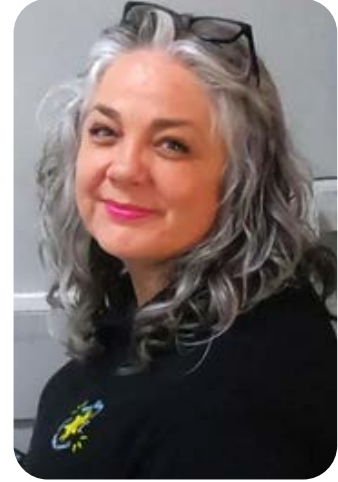
Mark Richardson is Chair of the Board of Trustees at Safe and Sound, a Derby charity supporting children and young people affected by exploitation. He has played a vital role in guiding the charity through a period of significant challenge and growth. Joining the board in 2020 during the Covid pandemic, Mark stepped up as Chair in 2021. Since then, he has helped lead the charity through increasing demand for support while ensuring long-term financial stability and supporting the growth of both staff and volunteers. Mark also guided the complex takeover of another local charity and, using his professional expertise in commercial property consultancy, led the purchase and renovation of the charity's new home, creating a lasting difference for the organisation, the young people it supports and the wider community.



Award Winners

Overcoming Barriers Award

Aisha Silverwood is the Volunteer Founder and Director of The Happiness Hub Derby. After finding that mindfulness helped her manage challenging health conditions in her own life, she wanted to use her lived experience to support others facing mental and physical health challenges. Through the organisation, she helps people who may be isolated or struggling with their wellbeing to build confidence, connection and coping strategies through free mindfulness courses and peer support. Entirely volunteer-led, The Happiness Hub Derby provides welcoming, non-judgemental spaces where people can learn practical mindfulness techniques, meet others with shared experiences and feel less alone in their struggles. Some participants have gone on to become volunteers themselves, helping support future groups. Despite her own health challenges, Aisha dedicates significant time, energy and personal commitment to supporting others and improving wellbeing across the community.



Award Winners

Lifetime Achievement Award

Doug Whitlam has dedicated over 40 years to swimming, transforming lives across Derby, Derbyshire and beyond.

Since starting as a volunteer coach in 1979 at Derby Phoenix Swimming Club, Doug has helped generations of swimmers develop not only in the pool, but in confidence and character too.



At a time when opportunities and pathways in swimming were more limited, Doug played a major role in helping shape a stronger and more inclusive system. As Head Coach for 21 years, and later Chairman and President of Derbyshire Swimming, he helped create opportunities that simply did not exist before. His contribution towards securing the Moorways 50m pool is a lasting legacy for the entire community.

Doug is known for his humility, dedication and resilience. Following major heart surgery in 2025, he was determined to return to the poolside. His commitment to swimmers and volunteers never wavered, inspiring everyone around him.

As President of Swim England from 2023–24, Doug championed volunteers nationwide, recognising they are the backbone of the sport. Despite receiving an MBE, he remains grounded and actively involved at a grassroots level.

Doug's contribution to the community over more than four decades has been extraordinary. His dedication has made swimming accessible, inclusive and life-changing for so many. Quite simply, Derby and the wider swimming community would not be the same without him.

List of Nominees

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who made a nomination for our 2026 Derby Voluntary Sector Awards. Every year, so many amazing and worthy people are nominated and it is always extremely difficult for our panels to choose the winners. This is why, after the awards night, we will be emailing out a personalised certificate to every single nominee, as they all deserve recognition.

Here is the full list of our 2026 nominees in alphabetical order:

- Aisha Silverwood
- Ajibola Olajide-Shokunbi
- Alex Johnson
- Al-Hurraya
- Ali Davies-Marsh
- Amanda Skrytek
- Anansi Theatre Company
- Andrew Cusick
- Angella Mighty
- Annette Griffiths
- Aspire 2 Succeed
- Avril Wagstaffe
- Bev Crighton
- Camder FC CIC
- Candice Lovelle
- Caryl Reyes
- Cettina Thomason
- Chellaston and Shelton Lock Community Hub
- Cleo Evans
- Colin Whetton
- Connected Perinatal Support CIC
- Corey Dobson
- Disability Direct - Hospital Discharge Service
- Disability Direct - Plot to Plate
- Disability Direct - Welfare Rights Service
- D'Mya Sandar
- Dean Stewardson
- Denise Elliot
- Derby Bayanihan Productions
- Derby City Mission
- Derby Computer Museum
- Derby West Indian Community Association
- Doug Whitlam
- Ellie Blair
- Eloise Gray
- Enabled Centre & Bright Futures
- Filbert Walk Community Centre / Warm Welcome Hub

- Finlay Mahoney
- Flourish and Thrive
- Gazafi Mohamed
- Georgia Wray
- Geraldine Coleman
- Girmay Tesfey
- Good Neighbours Derby
Volunteers
- Greener Littleover
- Headway Derby
- Ian Morgan OBE
- Isaac Dilley
- Isaac Mukasa
- Joe Johnson
- Karen Moreton
- Karl Fisher
- Kate Northover
- Kathie Mepstead
- Katie Bentley
- Katrina Foulkes
- Kayty Pemberton
- Keira Stanley
- Kenny Sharpe
- Kevin Marshall
- Layla Ivy Rose Douglas
- Lorna Smith
- Maria Hanson MBE
- Mark Richardson
- Mark Silo
- MECA
- Michael Flude
- Michelle Butler
- Mrs Hung Suet-Mui
- New Arrivals Voice
- Nigel Duffus
- Nihal Pandey
- Nikki Symcox
- Normanton Steering Group -
DT Communities
- Omolara Oladipupo
- Poss+Abilities
- Rainbow Rams
- Reach Community Grocery
- Reena Sharma
- RO Community Link CIC
- Roger Bowler
- Rosie Ashton
- Sandra & Andy Ward
- Sean Clare
- Shared Reading
- Sharon Smith
- Simon Jones
- Stuart Boon
- Susan Bradley
- The Age UK Derby and
Derbyshire Chaddesden Park
Volunteers
- The Happiness Hub Derby
- The Manasi Foundation
- Thrivemind Village CIC
- Yosief Alem Afewerki

Acknowledgements

With thanks to...



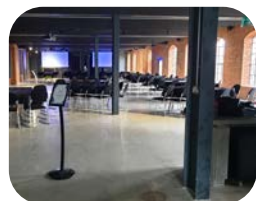
6pence Designs - Programme
www.6pencedesigns.co.uk



Laura-Rose Gee - Harpist
Facebook: @laurarosegee



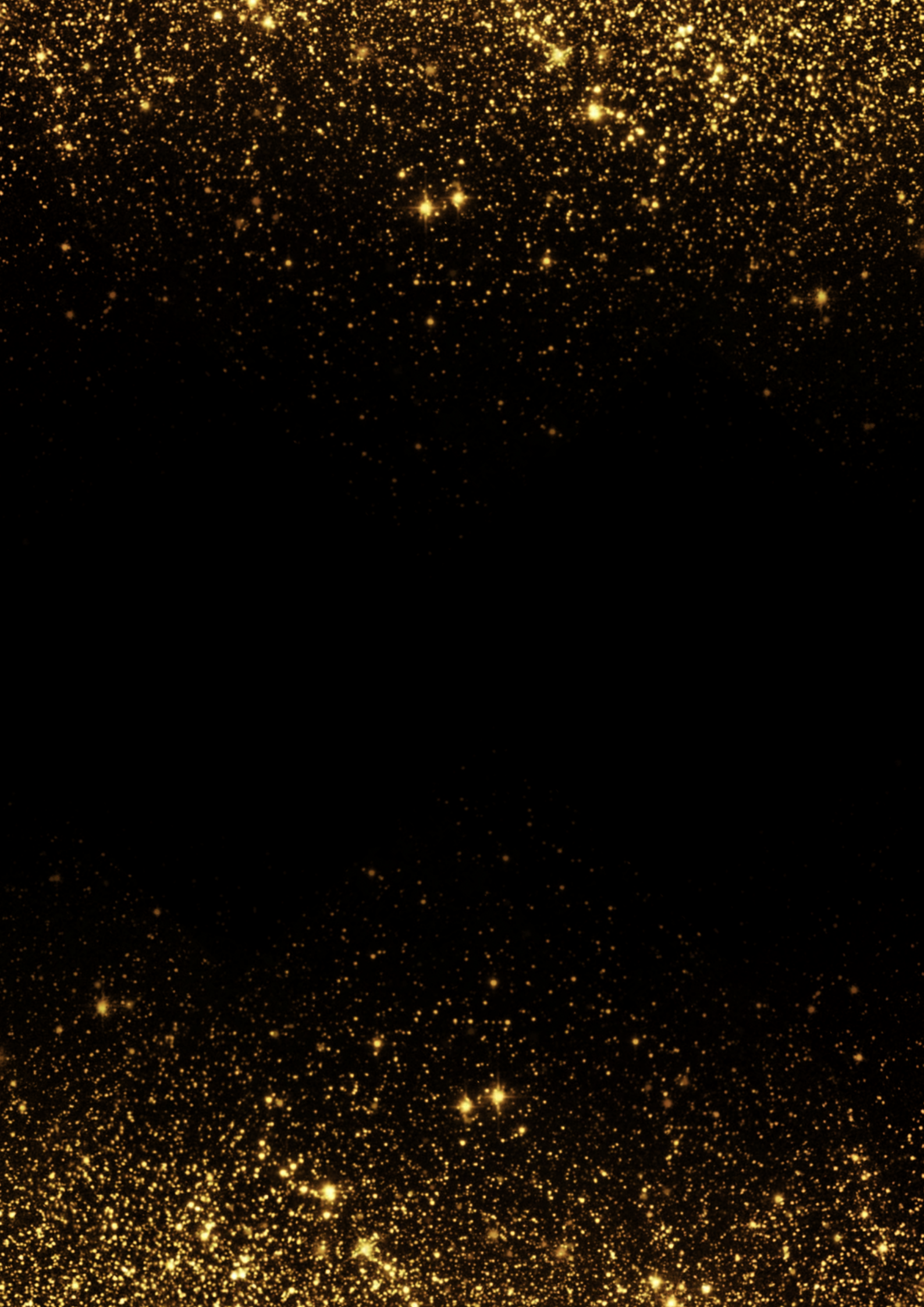
Shaun Hardwick - Photographer
www.shphotos.co.uk



The Italian Mill - Venue
www.derbymuseums.org



Mike Hardy - Singer and acoustic guitarist
www.mikehardymusic.co.uk






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